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THE THREE FALSE WOMEN OF LLANLAR

BY HERMANN HAGEDORN

Bess. It's a cold, cold wind blows in from the sea.

Moll. It's a stormy night we shall have this night.

Bess. I've a bed in my attic. Come lodge with me.
I'm afeared o' the wind and the wild moonlight.

Joan. Afeared! Afeared! The dead sleep sound.

Moll. Will they bury him now?

Bess. Will they bury him deep?

Joan. There's never a bed for *him* in the ground.

It's high in his rattling chains *he'll* sleep!

Moll. I'm afeared, I'm afeared!

Joan. Girl, hold thy tongue!

Moll. I'm afeared of his eyes so straight an' still

Astare at his true love till he swung,

And she fainted over her window-sill.

Joan. It's half-way back to the town we are!

We'll be lodged an hour before the night.

Bess. Oh, her face in the window was like a star,

As cold, as far, and as white, as white.

Joan. The Devil made ye o' craven stuff

Atremble for ghosts at dusk o' day!

At the Magistrate's ye were brave enough

When ye went and swore his life away.

Moll. I was sick wi' love and bad wi' hate.

Bess. And 'twas thou, Joan, that made us swear!

Joan. And now it's done, and his pretty mate

Wears black; and never a babe to bear!

Moll. The dark comes soon to-night.

Bess. The dark!

Moll. And it's heavy my feet are!

Joan. The village is nigh.

Moll. And it's here, Joan, it's here is the Fork
Where ye tempted us to swear the lie!

Joan. Quick, on!

Moll. They clutch me!

Bess. Mother o' Christ!

Joan. Leave her!

Moll. The night is all hotness and blur!

Bess. Joan, Joan, my feet are vised
In a cloven rock, and I cannot stir!

Joan. It's the fear has got ye, body and blood!

Moll. Joan!

Bess. The fiends!

Moll. They choke me with hands!

Bess. Joan!

Joan. Who holds me? Who plucked at my hood?

Moll. They burn my eyes wi' their terrible brands!

Joan. What imps possess ye? Come swift, come swift!
Give me your hands!

Moll. Joan!

Bess. Joan!

Joan. Who clutched me?

Moll. I saw the mountains lift!
And on a gallows I saw a man!

Joan. Give me your hands, I'll drag ye loose!

Bess. Joan!

Moll. Joan!

Joan. What weight's on my feet?

Bess. Hangman, stand back!

Moll. A noose, a noose!

Bess. Stand back wi' your cap and your winding-sheet!

Joan. They've tied my body with icy bands,
And it's cold is my flesh and hard as bone!

Moll. Joan!

Bess. Joan!

Joan. Your hands, your hands!

But the three false women of Llanlar—were stone.

HERMANN HAGEDORN.